

RED MEXICO

The Facts



Knights of Columbus

SUPREME COUNCIL

New Haven, Conn.

1926

THE TEST

The information in this booklet is compiled almost entirely from non-Catholic sources. The Mexican attack on the Catholic Church is not merely a religious persecution. It is an attack on the established principles of civilization and humanity. It is an attack on those principles which some peoples have shed blood and suffered to establish and preserve to our day. The Mexican problem is not alone a Catholic problem. It is the problem of liberty-loving, fair-minded, free men everywhere. Much of the material here published bears witness to this. A man's attitude to the Mexican persecution is a certain test of his ideas and ideals and his spirit.

CALLES "SOCIAL REFORM"

*(The facts of a few days of persecution
compiled from New York
newspapers)*

**FIFTY TO SIXTY DEAD,
TWO HUNDRED HURT,
WEEK ENDING AUGUST 8**
(Herald-Tribune, Aug. 9)

SIXTY SHOT IN GUADALAJARA
(Times, Aug. 10)

**SEVENTEEN EXECUTED,
BY TROOPS IN ZAHUA YO**
(World, Aug. 10)

**PRIEST REPORTED KILLED
SEVERAL INJURED IN MICHOACAN**
(Times, Aug. 11)

**THIRTY EXECUTED IN MEXICO
ARCHBISHOP REPORTS**
(Times, Aug. 12)

**TROOPS SHOOT FIVE
PRIESTS AGAINST WALL**
(World, Aug. 12)

Mexico's Intolerance

(From the St. Louis Post Dispatch)

We set forth below the religious provisions written into the Mexican constitution in 1917.

It is these provisions that the government now seeks to enforce.

They are so repellent, so alien to our own ideas of the right to worship as we see fit, the right to own, hold and dispose of property, and finally the right to free speech, that further editorial comment seems almost unnecessary.

There are nine major restrictions against the church and church institutions and clergy as follows: They are forbidden—

To own church real estate, or mortgages on same.

To own church buildings, or any other buildings.

To possess invested funds or other productive property. To maintain convents or nunneries.

To conduct primary schools.

To direct or administer charitable institutions.

To hold religious ceremonies outside of church buildings.

To cloth their ministers with a garb indicative of their calling.

Ministers of religion are debarred from publicly criticizing the fundamental laws, the authorities in particular, or the government in general. They may not vote, hold office, or assemble for political purposes. No religious periodical may comment on political affairs. Official permission must be obtained before opening a new temple of worship for public use. The state legislature may determine the maximum number of ministers of religious creeds according to the needs of a locality. The government regulates public worship.

Is there any cause for wonder that the religious people of Mexico are in revolt or that Mexico is forfeiting the respect of other nations?

The G. X. Q. of the Present Crisis in Mexico

(The following informative letter by a non-Catholic, a citizen of the United States, was published in the Oklahoma News, Oklahoma City, August 6th, and is reprinted with the permission of the publishers:)

The article published by The News, Tuesday, was, to my mind, not very well named. It was not the "A. B. C." of the Mexican crisis, but much more mixed. That is why I call it the "G. X. Q."

I, too, have lived in Mexico. I went there thirty-one years ago, and for many years, through its central highlands and its southern jungles, I knew its people.

I am out of there now less than a month, after two years of continuous residence, so that I have had an opportunity to observe the reactions of the people to some of the events that have led up to the present so-called crisis.

But one might live a lifetime in Mexico, as an American, and know little of the causes of the present trouble. To know these one must have been a student of Mexican history. I think I can claim fairly to have been all that.

The Mexican "Inquisition"

Your "A. B. C." informant touched upon the Inquisition in Mexico. He did not do any more, and he did not need to. Just to mention it suffices to conjure in the minds of his readers the phantom terrors we have been taught to associate exclusively with that institution.

The writer once searched, with the eyes of a Protestant and a Mason, through many volumes of the records of the Mexican Inquisition in an endeavor to discover something that would substantiate the grisly tales of horror with which it has been adorned, but could find in them only the sor-

did records that are common to our modern "Morals Court."

For that is what it really was; and the Indians were specifically exempted from its jurisdiction.

For sheer terror and oppression the "dry squad" will, in any one year, surpass the Inquisition's record of nearly 300.

To call Hidalgo the "Washington of Mexico" is to insult the sacred memory of the Father of His Country. Hidalgo led his Indian hosts to battle in defense of their king, not for independence.

What Hidalgo Did

Whatever ideas he may have had in the back of his head for independence, his voice was raised in favor of Fernando VII, who was a prisoner of Napoleon in France, and it was against the ideals of the French revolution and against "liberal" Spaniards that he pretended to strive.

And he ordered the butchery of innocent non-combatants, some of whom carried his signed safe-conduct in their pockets.

The outbreak led by Hidalgo and his successors was suppressed by Mexican volunteers; nearly 80 per cent. of the royalist forces being composed of Mexicans led by Mexican officers, not a few of them, before the end, being revolutionary bands taking advantage of the offers of amnesty to surrender in a body and join the armies of the viceroy.

At last only two revolutionary leaders remained at large, Victoria, a lone fugitive in the mountains of Vera Cruz, and Guerrero with a number of followers in the inaccessible fastnesses of the region now bearing his name as a state.

Some years later a barrack revolution in Spain brought forth a "liberal" constitution, and the Mexican people, seeing their cherished institutions in peril, supported Iturbide almost unanimously in his almost bloodless revolution which freed them from radical Spain.

The Downfall of Iturbide

Iturbide was the real "Liberator" of Mexico, and if he permitted himself to be declared emperor it was as much due to a knowledge of Mexican psychology as to any promptings of personal ambition.

That his downfall and exile was hastened by the meddling interference of President Monroe is not a matter of pride to thoughtful Americans, and that he had the vision to foresee the impending ruin of his country and sought to prevent it, and lost his life in the effort, but adds luster to his name.

Similarly criminal-minded men sought to overthrow Washington. Washington survived, Iturbide perished, and for his loss Mexico has been paying with blood and tears and treasure for a hundred years.

When we separate barrack mutinies from revolutions we find Mexico has had but three of the latter. The first was put down by Mexican volunteers, the second and third owed their success entirely to armed assistance rendered by the United States government.

There have been many barrack mutinies, but they have seldom extended beyond the capital or the larger cities where they originated.

The trouble that is Mexico had its being in the efforts of a small but militant group to control the appointment of bishops and priests, and the confiscation of the funds and properties held by the numerous educational and beneficent institutions founded and endowed during three centuries by wealthy and pious donors.

Colleges Turned into Barracks

It is this control and confiscation which the revolutionary has in mind when he talks of "separation of church and state"; it is the efforts of the clergy to prevent this control and confiscation that he brands as "the clergy meddling in politics"; and it is the possession of these institutions and their

properties which he refers to when he mentions "temporal power."

To the successful efforts of this militant group may be charged the present illiteracy of the Mexican people. This is not difficult to understand after seeing the numerous buildings, that once were colleges, now being used as frowsy tenements or lousy barracks, and all crumbling into ruin.

All the talk you hear about thousands of schools opened in Mexico by the governments of Carranza, Obregon, or Calles, is best described as bunk. Wherever you go you see ruin, not the ruin of recent revolt but the ruin of a century of decay and abandonment, of a gradual return to pre-Columbian barbarism. * * *

The anti-religious laws of Mexico are an outrage against civilization, and the attempts to enforce them a throwback to barbarism; and both are acts of pillage and efforts to render the people helpless against that pillage.

Calles Playing With Fire

The constitutions of 1857 and 1917 were never submitted to the people. Both were imposed upon the people by an infinitesimal militant minority by bullets and not by ballots.

The people of Mexico hate the whole tribe of revolutionists and politicians but are helpless against it because it is organized and armed, and because the bishops, to whom they look as their real and chosen leaders, resolutely refuse to call them to revolt.

If the bishops of the Catholic Church in Mexico were to forget for a moment their peace principles and theology and call the people to arms, the men now in control of Mexico would be torn into little pieces; it would be 15,000,000 against less than a hundred thousand.

But the Bishops will not do this. Perhaps they

fear that if the Indian once starts no one will be able to stop him. He may start in spite of them.

The Calles government is playing with fire and, if it continues in its madness, America may have the thankless job of putting it out. The Mexican people realize that there is but one certain remedy; only Calles and his crowd view it with apprehension.

As for the demands of the Church in Mexico, they are easily stated. She asks for the same religious liberty enjoyed by all under the Stars and Stripes.

But she will not get it because with it would come a free ballot and honest elections, blessings that Calles and his friends view with even greater fear than they view intervention. They might be good for the Mexican people, but they would be fatal to Mexican revolutionary politicians.

APPROBATION

"This opportunity is taken to congratulate the Knights of Columbus on the splendid pronouncement concerning the Mexican situation. It seemed to have aroused a dormant element in this country and to have shown it that American Catholics may not, with impunity, be disregarded and slighted."

—D. CARDINAL DOUGHERTY
Archbishop of Philadelphia.

Contempt for U. S. Rights in Mexico

By John Clayton

(The following article by a staff correspondent of the Chicago Tribune, written after a month's investigation in Mexico, was published in its issue of August 8th, and is here reprinted with the publisher's permission.)

San Antonio, Texas, August 7.—Mexico and the United States have reached an impasse. What is branded as brutality in government, failure to fulfill agreements, disregard of the rights of American citizens and failure to grant adequate protection to American lives have brought the Mexican government face to face with the most serious diplomatic controversy with the United States since the government of General Obregon was granted recognition in 1923.

Obligated to Protect Yanks

The Obregon-Calles junta was granted recognition by the American government after it had undertaken solemn obligations towards citizens and property of the United States. It was saved from the attack of De La Huerta, who sought its overthrow, because the United States supplied arms and munitions of war.

And up to now not a clause of the Warren-Payne-Ross-Roa agreement has been fulfilled, nor has any attempt been made to live up to undertakings agreed to by the Mexican delegates, Ramon Ross and Gonzales Roa, and ratified by the Mexican Chamber of deputies.

Five Hundred Notes Evaded

More than five hundred notes calling the attention of the Mexican government to its failures have been written by American Ambassador James Shef-

field to the Mexican government. It is said that the answers have, without exception, been evasions or direct refusals to act. The situation is such that Mr. Sheffield is leaving Mexico City on August 13 to report personally to President Coolidge.

Everything that can be done by diplomacy has been done, it is said, and the opinion in informed circles is that the administration is faced with the necessity of giving way to Mexican arrogance or making President Calles understand that unless he lives up to his agreements another form of action must follow.

Since the signatures of the four delegates were fixed to the Warren-Payne agreement which brought recognition, thirty Americans have been killed in cold blood, and of all the thirty cases only one man has been sentenced for his deed—sentenced to twenty years in prison. The Tribune correspondent is in possession of the details in all these thirty cases, and is prepared to disclose them.

Seize Lands Without Payment

There have been approximately five hundred cases of land seizures under the agrarian law, without payment either in bonds or cash, since the agreement was signed, in contravention of its terms. No satisfaction has been given by the Mexican government in these cases, nor has any promise been made as to when and how payment would be arranged. Under the terms of the agreement payment must follow within thirty days or the property be returned.

The oil question, the mining question, the alien land law, important as they are, form only a part of the controversy. The religious struggle I have not considered in presenting the facts I am disclosing in this first article. The main issue between the United States and Mexico is the utter failure of the Mexican government to live up to agreements and to protect American lives.

Waives Agreements Aside

Some of my American friends in Mexico blame the impasse on Calles' advisers. Perhaps they are right. But the fact remains that when any question dealing with the Warren-Payne agreement is brought before the president of the Mexican republic the powerful dictator of life and death for fifteen million dismisses them with the declaration that the government of General Obregon made these agreements, and he, General Calles, is not bound to fulfill them, and that this is a new administration, responsible only for its own promises and its own acts.

Many Americans probably have forgotten the heroism of Mrs. Rosalie Evans in defending her property until she paid the supreme penalty of her life. Mrs. Evans was a British subject, but an American by birth. Ambassador Sheffield, who was representing British interests immediately after the crime, made the strongest representations to the Mexican government.

The men who committed the murder were known. At one time they were in jail, but even in this dastardly case no action has been taken and the murderers are at large. The men behind the murders, Montes, a red labor leader, and José Maria Sanchez, are still holding trusted positions in provincial government.

Mrs. Evans was only one. There are many others, and there will be more in the future unless a different attitude is shown by the Mexican government.

General Calles rules Mexico at the point of a gun. He is responsible to no one. He does what he pleases. His elections are pronounced travesties, and there is evidence that he does not hesitate to kill an opposition candidate if the man can be put out of the running in no other way. Witness the death of Manuel Espino, killed at Dolores Hidalgo,

and a man named Dominguez, killed by state police at Oaxaca during the most recent elections for congress. They are two of many.

"Policy of Finger Shaking"

Elihu Root long ago summed up the Mexican situation when he said, "You cannot shake a fist at a Mexican leader and then shake a finger." "Finger shaking," is what most Americans in Mexico and even many Mexicans call the policy pursued by our government for years.

No one knows this better than the Mexican leader, and when he saw we did not intend to press seriously for fulfillment of international obligations he made the best of his situation. The result is that, according to Americans who have been in Mexico for years, and whose opinions are not influenced by their pocket book nerve, we are in a much worse position today than in 1924. Then we had at least hopes that the Obregon-Calles junta would fulfill its obligations.

Only Broken Promises

Today we have nothing but broken promises and the prospect that American rights and American lives will continue to be disregarded as long as we write notes that have nothing back of them.

The state department is today in possession of information, which, if given to the American public, would swing the country overnight from indifference or favor of Calles to open antagonism. Men in high positions are of the opinion that the state department owes it to the American public to disclose the facts, but such action has not yet been taken. No one but the state department is in possession of anything like the complete facts, and they would have more facts but for the circumstances that many Americans with just claims have given up the struggle for the moment and fail to register their claims through the American embassy in Mexico or the claims commission.

"Americans Have No Chance"

Some American citizens, despairing of action by the State department which would give them justice, have tried to obtain it in the Mexican courts. And they now say that here, as in other departments of the Mexican government, they haven't a chance.

A friend of mine whose business interests in Mexico are large, recently had a case pending before a Mexican judge of prominence and distinction. The evening before the decision was to be granted an emissary of the judge visited him at his home. He brought with him two decisions. The first was favorable, the second adverse.

Holding up the first, the Mexican said, "This will cost you one thousand pesos [\$500]. The other you can have for nothing." Thus is justice administered in small things. But in the larger ones the price is higher, and when it comes to cases affecting a national policy, it appears, the plaintiffs might as well not start suit. They will have only their costs for their pains.

Sure of American Favor

When it comes to questions of rights to oil lands, the attitude of the government is based on the belief that the American public is a natural enemy of the big oil interests. One of the "upper ten" of the Mexican government recently told an American representative, "We can do what we please to the oil companies and there will be only a smirk on the face of the American public."

But the state department does not need to base its case on oil, nor has it seized any such slippery foundation. The great sufferers in Mexico today are not the large companies. They have sufficient ways and means of working out their own destinies, if the government fails them.

The chief victims of Calles' policy of government at the pistol point have been the smaller individuals

—men and women whose whole lives have been devoted to the building up of a small property in Mexico, only to see their life work snatched away over night to suit some political whim. These men are without recourse, other than through their own government.

Their losses, and the lives of Americans sacrificed to the hatred of gringos, and the knowledge that the killing of a gringo, has in twenty-nine cases out of thirty since recognition gone unpunished, are in brief the basis on which Americans here are hoping for a more positive policy in Washington.

MACHINE GUN RULE

When school teachers in Mexico City went on strike because their salaries were not paid machine guns were turned on them to persuade the survivors to go back to their "popular" work. Had the investigators read the agrarian laws and their administration they would have found only conflict with the Eighth Commandment.

To say that Mexico is a democratic government begs the point. Its constitution is socialistic and, as one official said, contains "all that is good of bolshevism." It was forced upon the people, and every administration functioning under it has been a usurpation.

(The Wall Street Journal, Aug. 7)

Mexico and Russia

(The following A. P. dispatch is reprinted from La Prensa, New York:)

Mexico City. August 16. (A. P.) Stanislaus Ptskovsky, Soviet Minister in Mexico, declared that his government had put in effect in 1918 religious laws which contained the principal traits of the present Mexican regulations and that the churches in the beginning refused to accept them but in the end they submitted, and that in the last three years there had been no religious disturbances in Russia.

Ptskovsky does not draw conclusions, neither does he predict the results which may take place in Mexico, and only confines himself to narrating the Russian experience, saying that before the revolution of 1917, the Orthodox Russian Church was intervening intimately in affairs of the State and had powerful political influence in Russia.

The Soviets, he continues, separated the church from the State, submitted the religious organizations to regulations almost the same as those of Mexico, nationalized the properties of the church and prohibited religious instruction to young people. Both the orthodox church and the Roman Catholic Church refused to obey and many priests fought against the Soviet, uniting themselves with foreign invaders, but in the end the Soviet conquered the national and foreign enemies and the churches had to comply with the laws.

He adds that the Soviet put in effect educative and legal measures in order to obligate the churches to comply with the law, and that the government conducted an intensive campaign to teach the people the necessity of complying with the laws. That it was also necessary to arrest some priests and dignitaries of the church. He concludes by saying that today the religious question in Russia is merely a matter of private order.

Two Questions and Their Answers

Two questions summarize the attitude of a great multitude of Americans toward Mexico.

If Mexico is almost entirely Catholic, how does it happen that the Church is being persecuted? If education has been in the hands of the Church for so many generations, how does it happen that the Mexican people are so predominantly illiterate?

The first question is reasonable. The second question is based on the lies of anti-Catholic propagandists.

Mexico is almost entirely Catholic and yet it is in the hands of anti-Catholics. The present anti-Catholic rule of Mexico is an achievement of armed force. The present anti-Catholic constitution was framed by anti-Catholic revolutionists, never submitted to the people, preserved by violence, and is now being enforced by violence. The present anti-Catholic faction, in power since Carranza, controls the police and the military, and hence controls all elections, court proceedings, and other ordinary means of redress.

Ireland is predominantly Irish, and yet it was dominated and persecuted by a few Englishmen at Dublin Castle for centuries. Mexico is Catholic, but anti-Catholic demagogues, swept into power by armed revolution, rule Mexico with bullet and bayonet.

The Mexican people, because of their Aztec ancestry, are patient, docile, long-suffering. They are easy victims for the political schemer and the autocrat. The Mexican is not taught to look upon the Church as the American citizen looks upon it. Latin Catholics will stand by and see their Church persecuted where the English or Irish or German Catholics would be up in arms. The Latin Catholic is historically noted as easy prey for suave defamers

of his Faith and plotters against it. The anti-Catholic politician is usually a social reformer of one sort or another, and the novelty and apparent beneficence of his ideas dazzle momentarily Catholic minds which, trained or untrained, have almost an instinct for solid principles and slow safe progress. With the brilliance and blustering of revolution, the reformer rides into power. The Catholic citizen rubs his eyes. But it is too late. There are the soldiers and the police against him. The ballot box in Mexico is merely a part of military equipment. Bullets are counted and not votes.

The answer to the first question can be very briefly put: Catholic Mexico is subject to anti-Catholic Mexicans because of the relentless malevolence of anti-Catholics there, because of their malicious cunning, and because of their monopoly of airplanes, machine guns, and rifles. It is really very simple.

The second question is based on lies. For centuries, Catholic Mexico, due to the activity of Catholic priests and friars, enjoyed a reputation for popular education unequalled elsewhere. Catholic priests educated the Indians of Mexico so that they became leaders in the arts and sciences of the world. Popular education is not so old a practice as some would think it. Public school education in the United States, as it is sensibly understood, did not come into fruitful existence until the days of Horace Mann. And Horace Mann died in 1859. It has been the devastation wrought by the revolutionists in Mexico that is to blame for the present illiteracy of Mexico. Revolutionists and their ideas have been intermittently in power in Mexico since the revolution of 1857, which despoiled the Church. The government of Mexico has had seventy years to educate its people and it has done practically nothing. In days when popular education was, to say the least, very much of an innovation, the Church made a success of it. In days since 1860,

when a passion for popular education has been consuming the western world like fire, the Mexican government has done nothing.

The Mexican government is to blame for the present high-rate of illiteracy in Mexico. (Over eighty per cent. are illiterate.) It hampered and destroyed the educational work of the Church, and did nothing to replace or restore it.

The English colonists came to the United States, fought the Indians, robbed them, gave no thought to their advancement. As the United States grew in population and power, the Indian was hunted and corraled into detention areas, and, in the end, practically exterminated. The English found the Indian here and took his country. What did the Spanish Catholic and clergy do in Mexico? They trained the Indian, ministered to him. Mexico is his country today even more than when the Catholics came. The American Indian today is largely an object of pity or curiosity. Some of them have some wealth through accident. But they are few and America is no longer their country.

Several passages from an article by Bishop Francis C. Kelley, an authority on the Mexican Indian, substantiate this encomium of the Church's great educational work in Mexico. "Let us be fair," writes His Lordship, discussing the colonizing work of England and Spain.* "Spain *preserved* where we *destroyed*. With a constantly diminishing Indian population, wards of the State, having schools and colleges for all who wish to enter them, what one of our Indians has ever shown the governmental and military genius of a Diaz, the intelligent bravery of a Mejia, the surgical ability of a Urrutia, the philosophical knowledge of a Munguia, the science of a Carrillo y Azcona, the theological training of an Alarcon, the poetic fire of an Altamirano, the political acumen of an Estagnol, the legal and

*"A Sociologist in Mexico," The Paulist Press.

journalistic career of Sanchez Santos, the artistic talents of Panduro and Velasquez? Yes, all Indians. Name those of ours whose genius has made such marks on the history of our country. Sitting Bull? Geronimo? Alas! such a beginning speaks badly for an ending. Think this over before you condemn Spanish civilization in the Americas. We have little to show for one hundred years of "Anglo-Saxon" attempts to uplift our Indians. Yet, the Indians of Mexico have produced men of letters, artists, statemen, soldiers, scientists, learned bishops and priests—men of genius."

Again writes Bishop Kelley: "As in the United States, the pioneers of education in Mexico were the clergy, and there was no hesitation about taking up the burden; but, unlike the English colonists, the Spaniards at once went out with it to the Indian population. The letters of Cortez tell of friars coming at his request while he was still in command. In 1723 there were 2,396 of three Orders only. In 1570, there were fifty-one Franciscan missions in the Archdiocese of Mexico alone, and a school in each where children were taught to read and write. The friars had not teachers enough, for they kept calling for more. No church was without its school. Sahagun established a college at Santa Cruz, in spite of those who said that the Indians were incapable of learning. But Indian professors were trained, and the school was turned over to their care. A complaint against the clergy for the activities in education was sent by one Lopez to the King. . . . The law for the education of the Indians provided for schools wherever possible at no cost to the Indians. ("Laws of the Indies.") The laws of the Church put the obligation of establishing schools on every curate. The first Archbishop of Mexico and the Viceroy Mendoza set up the first printing press in America. This Archbishop saw an Indian graduate of Sahagun's College of Santa Cruz become a professor of Span-

ish and Governor of the City of Mexico. What Indian became Governor of Plymouth? In 1544 this printing press was turning out books for the natives who could read. The Viceroy explained the quantity turned out by the fact that 'there were so many who could read and write.' Thomas Gage, an Englishman, wondered at the wealth and power in the hands of 'Indian Dons' who were even governors. Humboldt was in Mexico in 1803 and wrote of the prosperity of the Indians. Trade schools were not wanting. The University of Mexico was opened in 1553. Two hundred and four years before Harvard took up the study of medicine, this university had its medical school. Eighty-six years before Hunter opened the first school of dissection in England, Mexico had started the study of anatomy and surgery with dissection. It would take volumes to write the story of the educational activity of Spanish Mexico."

SATANIC HUMOR

It is amusing to read of Calles' attack on the Catholic Church because of its interference in Mexican politics. His attack would lead one to think that the Church in Mexico is powerful, autocratic, that it terrorized its followers, that it controlled the government. What does one find: an unhappy institution, its clergy mocked and persecuted, its property stolen, its activities strangled, the butt of an anti-Catholic government, fighting for its very existence against vicious and dominant enemies. We are told that the Church is "meddling in politics." Calles has a satanic sense of humor.

Bolshevism in Mexico

(The following editorials are reprinted from the Wall Street Journal through the courtesy of the publishers.)

An Insecure Foundation

In further pursuance of its plan for breeding red vermin in Mexico, the Calles administration's regulations for expulsion of foreign ministers and teachers of religion go into effect on August 1. We are more interested in this movement than we would be if Mexico were breeding boll weevils to infest our fields. It will be of interest therefore to note bolshevism's utter indifference to law and order in the furtherance of its designs.

These regulations are absolutely null and void for three fundamental reasons:

- (1) The president had no legal power to make them.
- (2) Calles is not legally qualified to act as president.
- (3) The constitution of 1917 has never been legally adopted.

Article 27 of the constitution of 1917 forbids churches, "irrespective of creed" to hold property. Article 130 forbids anyone from being a minister of any religious creed unless he is a Mexican by birth, and provides several other restrictions. Not the Catholic church alone, but all religious denominations come under these provisions. Congress authorized Calles to amend the penal code. He stretched this authorization to include regulations for enforcing the constitutional provisions against religion. Congress alone could do this by enacting a statute. His justification is that he provided penalties for infraction of the articles.

The congressional authorization of the president to amend the penal code was illegal. Article 49 of the constitution says:

"The supreme power of the Federation is divided for its exercise into legislative, executive and judicial. Two or more of these powers shall never be united in one person or corporation, nor shall the legislative power be vested in one individual except in case of extraordinary powers granted to the executive in accordance with provisions of Article 29."

Notwithstanding this provision of the constitution congress vested legislative power in the president. He, in turn, went even beyond the specific authorization, and legislated other matters.

It cannot be said that this granting of legislative powers to the president was in accordance with the provisions of Article 29. That article only "in cases of invasion, grave disturbance of the public peace or any other emergency which may place society in grave danger or conflict," gives the president certain powers for "meeting the situation promptly and readily." This practically corresponds to our provision for suspending the habeas corpus. The grant of legislative power therefore was absolutely void.

Article 82, section 7 of the constitution relating to qualifications for president says:

"He shall not have taken part directly or indirectly in any uprising, riot or military coup."

As Calles was one of the ringleaders in the "military coup" in which Carranza was overthrown in 1920 he is disqualified by the authority under which he claims to act.

But this constitution also is not the constitution of Mexico. The constitution of 1857, in force when Carranza revolted, provided that amendments should be passed by Congress and approved by a majority of the state legislatures. This was never done. Carranza called a convention at which only his known adherents were allowed to sit as delegates. That body adopted the present constitution. It was not passed by congress; it was not approved

by a majority of the state legislatures, and therefore is void.

On these foundations the Mexican administration stands in beginning its war against religion.

—July 28.

Not a Catholic Question

Mexican government's new decree in which she places a muzzle on the religious press again brings the church matter to the front. Heretofore, there has been a disposition to look upon this as a controversy between the Catholic church and the Mexican government—something of which we as a people could take no cognizance. But a little study will show that it does concern the whole United States, and therefore is an American question.

Mexico, as a sovereign state, has the legal right to make any laws it pleases concerning religion, speech, press or future acquisitions of property. She may be within her sovereign rights in banishing priests and teachers, or adopting restrictive laws against religious organizations. But the United States has the right to look at those laws and all that takes place as a result of them. If she finds those laws based on doctrines in direct conflict with her ideals of citizenship and dangerous to her institutions she, as a sovereign state, has the right to refuse to encourage their spread within her own borders.

Mexico's new constitution swept away all semblance of religious liberty. Parents are denied the sacred right to have their children educated according to their consciences even in private schools. In the enforcement of the laws based on the constitutional provisions women—girls and nuns—have been treated in a way that cannot be described in public print. As in Russia, the idea back of all this is to deliberately break down and destroy that very thing which we hold basic for the preservation and upbuilding of our free institutions.

This is the Red doctrine, which is in direct conflict with our conceptions of government and citizenship. Our institutions are founded on certain basic truths. In the adoption of the present constitution, the enactment of various laws in accordance with the provisions of that constitution, Mexico shows her hostility to our doctrines and her adherence to those of the Reds. Between the two there can be no compromise. Self-protection demands that we do not encourage the spread of the Mexican doctrines in our own country.

Bolshevism in Russia was not considered a purely Russian question. We, as a nation, had no right to say what doctrines that country should uphold. But the possible spread of those doctrines to the United States was something of which we could take cognizance, and in that sense it became an American question. We refused to recognize the Soviet government for the reason that we could not put the stamp of our approval upon the Red doctrines which we hold to be subversive to our institutions.

For the same reason and to the same extent, that faraway Russia's plan of government became an American question so too does that of nearby Mexico.

—July 9.

PERSECUTION

Since 1875 the anti-Catholic dictators have set up, with State funds, scurrilous and anti-Catholic newspapers; they have imposed fantastic fines on congregations as the price of allowing the churches to remain open; they have looted altars and smuggled stolen altar vessels across our border to be sold as old metal; they have burned more libraries than were destroyed in the Thirty Years' War.

(Dr. C. E. McGuire, Current History, July)

Calles and Catholicism

(The following letter appeared in Heywood Broun's column in the New York World of August 22. The writer asked that his name be withheld because, he says, "I live in Mexico and I have to go back there pretty quick." The letter is reprinted through the courtesy of the New York World.)

I am an American, a Protestant and a Mason, which ought to satisfy even Bishop Leonard that I have no briefs for Rome concealed about my person. Apparently Calles is not a Catholic. So far as I know he holds to no religious faith, although I have heard him say that he is a believer in God. He is a Mason, but in Mexico most members of that fraternity are Catholics.* When he sets about the business of dying, Calles probably will call in a priest, if he retains his senses. If he happens to be unconscious, his family will.

The Calles womenfolk are Catholics. When one of his daughters was married a while ago, the religious ceremony took place in Santa Brigida's, the ultra-fashionable Catholic church of Mexico City, much and piously resorted to at present by the new aristocracy emanating from the revolution which has set up in business in the capital. Calles absented himself from the wedding, possibly because a sense of decency inhibited him from entering the edifice which in 1915 was sacked, defaced and defiled by his and Obregon's Yaqui Indian soldiers, who did it because they were so ordered. If I recall correctly, the bland Obregon attended, for the bridegroom was his private secretary.

There is nothing complex or recondite about the current conflict between the Government and the Catholic Church in Mexico. It is very simple. Here is the A B C of it:

1. Calles seeks to justify his drive upon the

*Editor's Note: This must of course be taken with reservations.

church by accusing it of mixing in politics. Doubtful, very. The facts do not sustain the argument. It is certain that whatever mixing-in the church may have been doing, covertly or overtly, it was neither important nor effective. The church has not been a political factor in Mexico since 1867, when Juarez shot Maximilian, who was induced to take the throne and try to make something out of the country, largely through the insinuations of Catholic leaders who were Mexicans and who at the time certainly had as much right to speak for the people as any of the other political paladins who were cavorting and orating and shooting all over the place.

If the church was so powerful and ambitious politically as Calles tries to make out, it seems curious that it was not strong enough to have kept in office Diaz—who gave the church its head, pretty much, within wholesomely circumscribed limits, inside of which the hierarchy was content to keep—and his crowd, and to have resisted successfully the onrush of the revolutionary tide. If the church was as virile and predacious politically as Calles proclaims it to be, his Government would not last longer than a \$2 bill in one of your New York night clubs. Doesn't that sound reasonable? The church was not interfering with Calles. It couldn't, for Calles has the guns and the church hasn't.

2. This ravaging against the church is merely a logical, but somewhat retarded, development of the revolutionary program. As all revolutions which have anything of proletarian support, the Mexican revolution is fundamentally opposed to three things—the old order, whatever it may be, capital and the nationally predominant religion. If the Protestant denominations occupied the place in Mexico that the Catholics do, the Protestants would be getting the same medicine that the Catholics are. For sixteen years the Mexican revolutionists have been rough-housing capital and every-

thing else that offended their notions of the suitable—including patient, long suffering Uncle Samuel—and squaring ancient personal and political grudges. They are only now getting around to attend to the church's case.

3. The assertion of Government spokesmen that the Catholic schools constitute a menace to free institutions and the progress of the country because of the poison they distil into the minds of the youth of Mexico is, of course, sublime rot. In more than a century, what have the various civil Governments of Mexico done to educate the people? Virtually nothing. What is Calles doing? Hardly more, save on paper. Who founded the principal institutions of higher learning in Mexico? The Catholics. The best schools in Mexico are—or were, until Calles shut them up—the church schools. The average Mexican who can afford it either ships his children out of the country to be educated, or sends them to the church schools in Mexico. He puts them into the church schools, not because of religious consideration but on account of the superior scholastic advantages they offer over the Government schools. Jealousy of the superiority of the Catholic schools and a desire to force the children who attend the latter into the Federal schools is partly responsible for the padlocking of the church schools. What has the Calles Government to offer in the stead of the church schools which have been put out of business? Nothing.

4. Outside of Calles and his intimate circle of "yesmen" there was absolutely no demand for the rigorous enforcement ordered by him of the anti-church clauses in the revolutionary Constitution. Not one per cent. of the people gave a hurrah in hell one way or the other. Power always goes to a Mexican's head—to the heads of most folks, in fact. Calles is on top and he is grinding the faces of the Catholics in the grit because he can, and he doesn't like them anyway. If the Mexican Catholics were

in the driver's seat they'd be putting the bud to Calles as he is lacing it into them.

5. This anti-Catholic movement—and right here we come to the real bug under the chip—will serve as an excuse for trying to steal considerable real property of various sorts which the Government has reason for believing has been accumulated more or less covertly by representatives of the church since 1857 (I am not sure of the date, but it happened about that time), when the then Government of Mexico, figuratively speaking, held up the church by the heels and shook every centavo of its real wealth out of its pockets. Most of the proceeds, consisting of rich farming and productive urban property, were either bestowed outright, or nominally sold at a small fraction of its value, to deserving patriots. Many of the huge present-day fortunes of aristocratic families in Mexico were founded upon these malversions of the mid-nineteenth century. It's the old army game.

WHAT THE PEOPLE WANT

When unjust laws which go against the immense majority of the Mexican people are derogated or reformed—which is what the people are yearning for—when laws sacredly guarantee religious liberty, then, in everything which lies within the jurisdiction of the State, neither the Bishops nor the Sovereign will interpose themselves. They will do as they do in the United States, where the Constitution and laws permit religious liberty.

(Archbishop Del Rio, in N. Y. World, Aug. 10)

Their War Record Is Not Dimmed

In extending the welcome of the city to their delegates, assembled in Philadelphia for the forty-fourth annual convention of their Supreme Council, Mayor Kendrick told the Knights of Columbus that he was "one of the many hundreds of thousands who were impressed and satisfied with the splendid help you gave your country and our allies during the trying times of the late war." No one who has read the resolutions taken by the delegates in their subsequent meetings can question the determination of the Knights of Columbus to continue to be of service to the nation, wherever it is possible. A pledge of \$1,000,000, involving an assessment on eight hundred thousand members of the Order at large, is significant of a patriotism not satisfied with mere ideals. That sum was voted to serve the cause of stamping out from these United States the politics of Soviet Russia, and to make possible in Mexico the enjoyment of liberty of conscience and democratic freedom. Careful perusal of the full text of the resolution is likely to impress one with the fact that the solicitude of the Knights for the causes they have espoused, is not without foundation.

No secrecy shrouded the deliberations of the Supreme Council, in their three-day's session at Philadelphia. The superb accomplishments of the past year, and the plans that were approved for future prosecution, are a matter of public record. It is a record likely to win the commendation not only of all members of the Order, but of every thinking American who has the interest of humanity at heart.—*America*.

NOWHERE OUTSIDE OF RUSSIA

(From The Mirror, Springfield)

Nowhere outside of Russia is religious training absolutely forbidden except in Mexico, where the name of God must not be mentioned in schools; no symbol or picture of a religious nature must be displayed on the walls; no scapular or medal must be found on the person of any pupil.

Nowhere outside of Russia is trial by jury denied to all who urge that the national Constitution be amended except in Mexico, where all the anti-religious provisions of the infamous Constitution of 1917 are made sacrosanct.

Nowhere outside of Russia is freedom of speech absolutely denied to all as it is in Mexico, where the religious press is forbidden to comment on any act of the government; the right of peaceful assemblage, to protest against the injustice of the law, is denied, and those who circulate petitions to amend the Constitution are summarily thrown into jail, because all criticism of the religious provisions of the Constitution is unconstitutional.

CONFIDENCE

(An extract from an editorial in The Catholic Standard and Times, diocesan publication of Philadelphia. The editorial is especially significant in view of the fact that Philadelphia was the Convention City in which the Knights passed their now historic resolution.)

The Knights of Columbus, in the resolutions passed at the Supreme Convention just held in this city, justified the Catholic confidence reposed in them. In ringing tones they set forth their position as sterling American citizens. As an integral part of this nation they demand that this government be true to its record of helping the persecuted and oppressed among weaker nations within our sphere of direct influence.

The danger to our own nation is also set forth very consistently. A complete breakdown of liberty, brought about by armed communism, is a dangerous infection on our frontier. No need for the Knights of Columbus to point out that the "Red" bacilli are already at work among definite groups in our own country. The government knows this too and understands very well that the Knights of Columbus are justified in their statement.

* * *

The action of the Knights of Columbus is cheering and wholesome.

COLUMBIA
NEW HAVEN, CONN.